

Looking Forward

We like to start out each new year reviewing the previous year and then reviewing our goals for the new year and how they line up with the vision and dreams the Lord has given us for ourselves and for the church.

As the leaders of Cell Life Church International, we must share the vision the Lord has given us for Cell Life Church around the world. The gospel is not for any single people or nation, and neither is the vision the Lord has given us for Cell Life Church as a whole.

The vision the Lord has given us is for all of Cell Life Church whether you are in North America, Pakistan, the United Kingdom, Australia, South America, Indonesia, Africa, Asia, or the Middle East.

When we first started talking about forming a new church years ago, we spent many many hours in prayer. We did not want to feed into the consumer Christianity that is widespread today. That is the faithless religion that is looking more for what's in it for the individual than what's best for your neighbor.

We did not want to create just another place for people to come, feel good, and move on.

We wanted to re-start a movement that Jesus started 2000 years ago. We wanted to encourage people to stand up for Christ wherever they are.

We wanted to see people become the hands and feet of Christ.

We wanted to equip people to be effective ministers right where they are, whether it is at school, at work, at home, in the streets, or in the market places.

We wanted to restore the church to the place Jesus left it in Acts and the Apostles spread it to.

We knew this would not be easy.

We knew there would be people who would not understand.

We knew the devil would take aim at us and has.

However, we also knew that we must obey what the Lord was calling us to do.

We had never heard the phrase "be the church" before, but it fit what we felt the Lord was calling us to encourage people to do.

You see friends, church is not a place. Church is the bride of Christ. +3Church is the body of believers of Jesus together serving in Jesus' name and giving Jesus all of the glory.

It really is that simple. We are called to "be the church".

What does it mean to "be the church"?

Many have used this as an excuse to not be a part of a church body or group and isolate themselves from other believers. This is not correct and it is very dangerous.



Hebrews 10:24-25 says:

²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

The writer of Hebrews is very clear. We are to encourage one another toward love and good deeds. We can't do that if we are not gathering together regularly.

So “being the church” is not about not going to an established church. It is about being the hands and feet of Jesus.

Maybe you are asking yourself, “How can I be the hands and feet of Jesus?”

It is really very simple. You follow the two greatest commandments as Jesus shares in Matthew 22:37-40

37 Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

To be the church, we must love the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul, and mind and we must love our neighbors as we love ourselves.

The more we love the Lord the more we will see our neighbors with his eyes and have compassion for them. We will see them through his eyes and love them all the more.

Everything we do is based on these two commandments. If we can keep that in the forefront, we will do well.

Jesus does give some practical things we can do as we “be the church” instead of just going to church.

Let's look at Matthew 25:31-40

31 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. 34 “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ 37 “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ 40 “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

There are practical things we can do to love our neighbor and this lists many.

We feed the hungry, clothe the naked, house the homeless, give water to the thirsty, and so on.



Here's the key with being the church though. You must do these things in love. You must do these things for others out of compassion and love for them and love for the Lord.

Doing these things without love for the person or love for the Lord is not being the church.

Anyone can feed someone who is hungry. Only a true believer in Jesus can feed someone who is hungry with the love of the Lord and bless them and feed their soul at the same time.

Look at the state of the early church right after Jesus ascended into Heaven in Acts 2:42-47

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

That is the vision the Lord has given us for Cell Life Church International, and we want you to share this vision with us.

Our vision is to bring unity back to the church and gather together, often. We want to sing together, pray together, serve together, and laugh together.

We encourage cell sites, home churches, and individuals around the world to come together and sing and pray and laugh. We encourage all cell sites, home churches, and individuals to love their neighbors and communities.

We ask all cell sites, home churches, and individuals to serve their community in some way each month and give the glory to God.

Friends as we looked upon past messages about our vision for Cell Life Church International, we see the Lord really hasn't changed it over the years. It is about loving God and loving people.

Many church groups use that phrase. It is easy to say. It rolls off the tongue so smoothly.

The difficulty and work come in living it. That is not easy. It does not just happen. We must be in tune with God through the Holy Spirit ourselves. We must be seeking God ourselves.

Friends, we encourage you to be the hands and feet of Christ wherever you are and whatever you are doing.

